

Theology vol 34
ANIMADVERSIONS

UPON A

PAMPHLET

Entitled,

A True RELATION of

Some Proceedings

AT

SALTERS-HALL.

To which is Added,

A LETTER to Mr. JOSIAH EVELEIGH.

By JAMES PEIRCE.

L O N D O N,

Printed for JOHN CLARK, at the Bible
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ANIMADVERSIONS

UTON A

P A M P H L E T

London

A T T E N T I O N

SOME PROCEEDINGS

A T

SALT



To which is added

A LETTER to the

By James P. Kirk

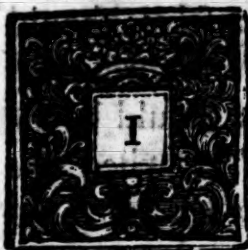
LONDON

Printed for John G. and at the Bible
and (town in the building)

& Price six pence



Animadversions, &c.



FIND the affairs of *Exon* are nearly concern'd in some things contain'd in a Pamphlet, just come down, intitl'd: *A true Relation of some proceedings at Salters-Hall, &c.* which I shall therefore now take some notice of. As to what is related of the Ministers subscribing, I have nothing to do to judge of their use of their liberty; if they design thereby neither to lay a Stumbling-block in their Brethren's way; nor to tempt any of them to yield to a practice which they scruple, as seeming to derogate from the sole authority of Christ, as our *Master*; nor to cast an *odium* on those, who upon principle are utterly against all such Subscriptions. I perceive the intention of publishing the *Advices* is to justify the methods taken at

Exon; and accordingly the Gentlemen here with comfort reflect on their own conduct, when they find it so conformable to the Ministers sentiments, viz. in the *Advices*, p. 21. Had the *Advices* been publish'd by them, I should not have wonder'd; but that the Ministers themselves should be the publishers, appears extraordinary. Is it not odd, that advices should be given the Gentlemen *April 7*. when the Gentlemen had done their work *March 6*? And when the Ministers knew the State of the *Case*, would they pretend to justify the Gentlemens proceedings? I have some reason to doubt of that, since Mr. *Thomas Bradbury*, who was one of the subscribers of the *Letter*, *April 7*. which accompanied the *Advices*, has told the World in a *Letter* dated but 4 days after, viz. *April 11*. That he reads with sorrow that Mr. *Peirce* has been ill used. And why may I not think it as true of the rest as of him, that they could within 4 days after the signing their untimely *Advices*, see cause to condemn the proceedings? Why then should they be now publish'd, as tho' they

they were design'd to abet them? And if they are not so design'd, why do they publish the Gentlemen's *Letter*, which so improves them, without disclaiming that improvement? 'Tis the Ministers part to clear these things: and 'till they do, I have reason to look upon them as patronizing all the arbitrary and tyrannical proceedings of the Gentlemen: and I congratulate them on this occasion, if they can esteem this will prove a reputation to their cause.

BUT to come to the *Advices*, p. II. They begin thus: *Some of our number having been apply'd to by several worthy Gentlemen of Exon for Advice, how to conduct themselves under their unhappy circumstances: We are clearly of opinion, &c.* I think I have just reason to complain here of the usage I have met with from my Brethren, that they would undertake to give advice in an affair at such a distance, upon receiving information from one side only. Had it not been civil, prudent, and christian, for one of them at least to have communicated to me the representation
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the Gentlemen made of their unhappy circumstances, and to have desir'd to know from me whether it was a fair one? Am I become the only man in the world not worth hearing in his own cause? Am I grown at length so scandalous, that no regard is to be paid to the Accounts I give of myself? 'Tis my comfort, that I was not always so treated by them; and I am sure I have given them no cause for their alteration. This conduct does not, I think, suit with one of their own *Advices*, p. 13. for it favours, if I mistake not, of either some *personal disrespect* to me, or at least of a *personal respect* to some body else.

AND I cannot but, on this occasion, mention what I have been inform'd of, that when Mr. *Walrond* sent about *August* last a very disingenuous account of our affair, and some of the *London* Ministers met about it, and one of great equity and prudence moved, that before any Answer was return'd I should be writ to, that they might hear on both sides, this just and prudent motion was put off with
such

such an answer as this ; That *that would imply a Suspicion of Mr. Walrond's veracity, and ability.* A heinous Crime ! And yet I'll venture to say, since he was the complainer, it had been a much lighter thing to suspect him (if the sending to me had carried so much in it,) than it was to suspect so many persons as were complain'd of in his letter, who are not a whit behind him for *ability*, and much less for *veracity*. But I shall take another occasion to speak of this Gentleman.

To return to the *Advices* : I grant what they say to be true, *That there are ERRORS in doctrine of such a nature, as will not only warrant, but oblige the people to withdraw from these Ministers that maintain and teach them.* But I hope it will be allowed, that this *advice* signifies nothing, in case Ministers can't be proved to *maintain and teach* such errors. I know of no such that I have as yet been charged to maintain, or teach, upon any evidence, that carries the least air of Credibility.

I never doubted of what they assert in the next paragraph, of the People's right
to

to judge for themselves; and therefore I say nothing about it. Only let me consider the restrictions they would have used by the people in the exercise of their right.

1. The first is p. 12. That the people must by no means suffer their passions, prejudices, or unreasonable jealousies to byass their judgment; but must search the Scriptures, and be determined by them, both as to the merits of the cause, and the manner of proceeding. Had this course been taken, 'twould have effectually prevented our unhappy division. But as far as I can perceive, nothing has been less regarded by the imposing side, thro' the whole quarrel, than the Scriptures. As to the manner of proceeding, 'tis evident a plain scripture Rule has been neglected, tho' the other side often insisted on it; namely, *That against an elder an accusation should not be received, but before two or three witnesses:* of which I shall have occasion to say more presently. Nor have the Scriptures been the rule by which the determination has been made against us. How

evident is it, according to the *Account* printed by that side, that the *Articles of the Church of England*, the *Assembly's Catechism*, the *vote of the Exeter Assembly*, or the *Articles of the seven Devonshire advisers*, have been made the standard, instead of the *Scriptures*? I confess the Gentlemen may well plead for their excuse, that they understand the Ministers meaning better than we do: they may well think, that the Ministers never design'd, that they should be determin'd by the *Scriptures* immediately; but by the explications which the *Convocation*, or the *Assembly* had given of the scripture doctrine. Or else how could they take the same course themselves, and be so zealous for a Subscription to the words of both? I confess I can't account for their advice and proceedings together, by any other way than this, that when the determinations of fallible men were to be substituted in the room of the *Scriptures*, they would do it as decently as the thing would bear; and therefore pass'd them over with a civil, but I think, a very empty complement.

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If the Gentlemen had treated us even with that kind of civility, they would not have parted with us in such a rude and contemptuous manner as they did : which, if I mistake not, was a sign that they were under a *bias*, which the Advisers would not care to approve. It seem'd to me to favour too much of *passion* and *prejudice*, as did indeed the whole conduct of this affair. And had not things been managed by a prejudice in favour of the determinations of men, it could never have been so earnestly insisted on, that we should submit our judgments to them, rather than the Scriptures.

2. THE second *Advice* shews what the design of the whole is ; namely, not to direct the people what to do, but to encourage them in what they have done. They will need to give a clear account of the wisdom of their proceedings, in sending their *advice* how to proceed, when the business is over. For my part I can understand nothing by this, but that they who pretend to be Advisers, are resolved to be party-men in the quarrel, and to
abet

abet all that the seven country Ministers
 and the Gentlemen have done. But when
 they think it *expedient* for the people to
call for the advice of neighbouring Ministers
and others; I would ask them whether
 they mean that only twelve of the people,
 being on one side, should take upon them
 to do this, without consulting with the
 rest? Let them suppose a quarrel to be
 in their own congregations, would they
 think it a proper Method, that only one
 side should chuse Advisers for the com-
 posing it? Would they not resent the in-
 jury done them, if twelve men, that were
 of the opposite side to any of themselves,
 should take upon them to chuse the per-
 sons who should be the arbitrators in the
 cause? Was it ever heard of from the be-
 gining of the world, that such an arbi-
 tration was proposed? Nay, and is it not
 an unaccountable method of proceeding,
 that all the arbitrators should be declared
 party-men in the quarrel? Is any good to
 be expected from such management? And
 yet this was our case, as to the seven neigh-
 bouring Ministers call'd in here: and none

know better than the Subscribers to these *Advices*, that it was the same as to the others whose direction was ask'd, and who were not neighbouring Ministers. Let the world judge, whether these Ministers are not partial, and whether they have not in the least been influenced by personal respect, or disrespect.

3. THE next *Advice* is extraordinary, and therefore I shall transcribe it. *If any minister is suspected by his hearers to hold dangerous errors, and the people in a serious and respectful manner desire him to be plain with them, and let them know what his real belief is, that they may not by mistake either wrong him or their own Souls; we think it reasonable he should comply with their desire, and be ready to give an account of the hope that is in him with meekness and fear; that the people may have no ground to charge him with pride or prevarication, sacrificing his own peace, and their's too, to a stiffness of humour, or punctilio of honour.*

I have many a time heard our Brethren of the congregational way laugh'd at, for al-

leging this text of scripture in the behalf of
 the *Declarations* they require of such as are
 admitted to their communion; and I can't
 but a little wonder, to see so many Names
 of another sort subscribed to a paper,
 which with as little reason drags the same
 text in to support another cause. Is it not
 surprizing, that the direction the Apostle
 gives to Christians, how to behave them-
 selves toward their heathen persecutors,
 and that whether they ask'd them *in a*
serious and respectful manner, or not, should
 be transform'd into a rule for the beha-
 viour of Ministers toward their Hearers?
 What can be the ground of this applica-
 tion, unless it be that the hearers succeed
 those heathen persecutors? I hope our bre-
 thren will not pretend that. If any of us are
 asham'd to profess the christian religion, or
 to defend it when we are called to do so,
 'twere somewhat to the purpose to al-
 lege that text against us. But as the case
 now is, I can't but think our Brethren's
 insisting upon it, in the same breath,
 wherein they declare for men's being de-
 termined by the Scriptures, is virtually
 an

an acknowledgment, that they can find nothing to their purpose in the Scriptures, if this text be really foreign to it. For my own part, I was never unwilling to give a reason of the hope that is in me : and if my hearers are not yet acquainted with it, it must be either because I have been the most miserable of all preachers, or they the most stupid hearers. And that no one may trouble me with such questions, I declare to all men that the Scriptures are the matter, the rule, and reason of my hope ; these I stick to, and hope, in spite of all the suggestions of malicious whisperers, I shall do so unto the death. I know well enough at whom the insinuation in the close of this article is design'd to point ; and 'tis not hard to guess who the person is that suggested it. But I shall let the world know, that the great correspondent of these Advisers wants neither for *pride*, nor *prevarication*. And whatever reports he may with his mean arts have rais'd of me, I believe my whole conduct, wherever I have lived, will justify me, that my greatest stiffness

ness

ness has been in *keeping a good conscience*. Nor have I sacrificed my own, or the people's peace to any thing but that. I confess, I think every christian, and especially every Minister, should be a man of honour; and better were it for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void in this respect. But as I have all along declar'd, I stand upon nothing, and I will sacrifice every thing, but a good conscience for peace; let the Gentleman I speak of, who knows his name without my telling it, let him, I say, with his six brethren; or let the Advisers, or any man in the world, heal the breach, without any regard at all to me; I'll engage to withdraw, without ever disturbing their peace; nor will I insist upon a reparation of my honour, however dear to me, and however barbarously some men have endeavour'd to wound it.

BUT I have a heavy charge behind against this part of the *Advice*, and that is; That it is design'd to overthrow and craftily subvert an *apostolical canon*, which carries the greatest equity in it. And that

that is, 1 *Tim.* v. 19. *Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.* Nor do we meet with any other manner of proceeding prescrib'd in the New Testament. Now this rule being plain, 'tis evident we ought not to have been proceeded against upon suspicion. There ought to have been some evidence produced against us, that we *maintain'd* or *taught* some false doctrine; which is not so much as pretended. And for men to confront so plain a rule, by alleging a text which do's not relate to the same thing, is very disagreeable to a profession of the Scriptures being the rule to determine us. And I shall be obliged to my Brethren, if they will let me know how they guard against a *popish inquisition*, while they abet this method. 'Tis an easy matter for men to call any notion a *dangerous error*, and then to whisper about a *suspicion* of a Minister's being in it; to insinuate he must be so, because some of his acquaintance are so; or because he guards against any danger of speaking amiss in disputable matters, by keeping
close

close to the scripture rule. 'Tis an easy matter for men to cover their inquisitory temper with an expression of a *concern* for men's *souls*, and a desire not to *wrong* a Minister by *mistake*, but to be able to *justify* him: and nothing is more conducive to advance the noble design, than for the people to apply to him in a *serious and respectful manner* in this case. These have been the arts used here against us; and I need not say what has been practis'd in like manner elsewhere. And the whole design of this is the same with the popish inquisition, to get out of men evidence against themselves. And if suspicion will justify the Dissenters proceedings in torturing men's consciences, I can't imagine why they will not justify the Papists in doing the same: and so we have an unscriptural and popish method fairly established. I have known the time, when many of the Dissenters have look'd upon those who denied the *Antinomian* opinions to be in *dangerous and damning errors*; and if these were sometimes join'd in communion with men of better principles and

temper, and a prudent Minister, to avoid offence and preserve peace, kept himself to the scripture way of speaking; will our Brethren think, that the people would have done well to go and constrain him to speak plainly about such matters? Suppose he apprehended not the like danger, that some of his people did, and thought that both sorts might bear one with another, while they were truly christian in their conversation; and that the declaring for one side eagerly was the way to set all in a flame, and therefore forbore meddling with the points in controversy; would such a man deserve blame? Would it be just to slur, reproach, and eject him for such his prudent behaviour?

I cannot but upon this occasion remind some at least of these Ministers, of the advice which they gave *August 26, 1718.*
 “Not to suspect any among us to be infected with these errors, unless we have
 “good ground for it, 1 Cor. xiii. 5. *Charity thinketh no evil,—hopeth all things.*
 “That if any already in the Ministry shall
 “fall

“ fall into that pernicious error [of deny-
 “ nyng the proper godhead of Christ and
 “ the Holy Ghost] and persist in it, and
 “ teach men so, it will become our indi-
 “ spensable duty, as we have opportunity,
 “ to warn people of them, *Prov. xix. 27.*

LET any one judge by the printed ac-
 counts, whether the former of these me-
 thods has been taken; and whether there
 has been any proof brought against us
 of being *fallen into, persisting in, and*
teaching men what they call a *pernicious*
error.

LET me here remind my Brethren,
 that our blessed Saviour himself was sus-
 pected to hold and to practise somewhat
 very dangerous, by the *chief priests, scribes*
and elders, who had as much right to con-
 cern themselves in an examination of such
 matters, as our hearers can have; and yet
 when they came to him, and desired him
 to be *plain* with them, in telling them *by*
what authority he acted, and *who gave him*
that authority, he did not think it *reason-*
able to comply with their desire, and there-
 fore only answer'd their impertinent que-

tion by putting another question to them; *Mar. xi. 27.* Again they must remember, how at another time the disciples of the *Pharisees* and the *Herodians* applied to him about a matter of great importance, a mistake about which might be indeed dangerous; and they in a seemingly very serious and respectful manner desir'd him to be plain with them, and let them know what his real belief was. They came to him and said: *Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not? And yet their design being to intangle him in his talk, our Lord would not comply with their desire, nor give them a plain answer; but sent them away marvelling, Matth. xxii. 15, 16, &c.* I know our Brethren will not say, the enquirers had any ground to charge our Lord with pride or prevarication, or with sacrificing his own peace, and theirs too, to a stiffness of humour, or a puerility of honour. I hope I may be al-

lowed to have follow'd a good example, when I have sometimes had to do with impertinent Enquirers. And tho' I have not shun'd to speak my mind plainly enough, when I have been desir'd in publick; yet I think I could be under no obligation to speak it plainly, upon the account of the hearers apprehending any errors to be dangerous, unless I apprehended them to be so myself; as they all know I declar'd publicly I did not. And if when in conversation I suspected a design of intangling me in my talk, I only improv'd the suspicion for the direction of my own conduct, I hope I may be esteem'd to have innocently follow'd a better adviser than my Brethren, *Prov. xvii. 14.* and they themselves upon second thoughts will not count that in me a crime, which he would have reckon'd an honour, *Chap. xx. 3.*

In their fourth *Advice* they direct the people to *be ready to receive all reasonable satisfaction*; but what is reasonable satisfaction, they don't tell us: I suppose the subscribing the Words of the Holy Ghost

is not to be esteem'd such, but we must call some body *master* beside Christ.

THEIR last *Advice* relates to the manner of our parting, in case it be found necessary : which Advice coming a month after the parting, could not prevent the tyranny, injustice, and cruelty which was then practis'd ; and of which I have complain'd to the world, in a manner which they are not able to gainsay. And to this day do they persist in the most disingenuous way of treating us, which I pray God to forgive.

I have somewhat to add concerning the Gentlemen's *Letter* subjoin'd.

THEY say, p. 21. *Nor could it but be grievous to us to hear what perplexity and trouble it had occasion'd in London, &c.* I fear that &c. will be a very long one. But the reason why I take notice of this passage is, that I may observe to the Reader, that whatever the consequences should prove at *London*, or elsewhere, they are wholly chargeable upon the Gentlemen's side ; since they only apply'd to *London*, nor did we at all. I know we have been
blamed

blamed by some for not doing it; and I have seen a very sensible Letter from one of the Ministers, which suggested they might have been more capable of serving us, had we represented our Case to them. I have been ready sometimes to regret our neglect in this matter; but now I see the consequences of my Brethren's interposing in our affair, I adore the good providence of God, whereby we have been kept from contributing in the least to the kindling that flame. And I know very well, that soon after the paper of Advices was laid before the Committee of the three Denominations in *London*, there were endeavours used by some in these parts to prevent that paper's being agreed to by the Ministers; and I verily believe, that all the disturbance which has been raised there, was owing to the suggestions of those, who would rather hazard the embroiling the whole Body, than run the risque of securing peace with a diminution of their own honour.

THE Gentlemen add: *However 'tis with comfort that we reflect on our conduct, when we find it so conformable to your sentiments.*

ments. And thus these Advisers, who have publish'd this *Letter*, have truly made themselves the patrons of the Gentlemen's proceedings. Hear, O Heavens! they who should be the Ministers of righteousness, make a shew of taking part with injustice, perfidy, and oppression! And now I call upon them, that they, any of them, Mr. *Bradbury* only excepted, who the same day this *Letter* was written disown'd these proceedings; I say, I call upon these my Brethren, or any one of them, to shew that I have charged the Gentlemen without cause. Let them, if they dare, before the World justify the proceedings, according to the Gentlemen's own account. And if they do not, I leave it to the World to judge, what censure they deserve, for making such a shew, as they have done, of justifying their proceedings, by publishing this *Relation*.

THE Gentlemen complain, p. 22. of the *violence and artifice, wherewith the attempts against the Ever blessed TRINITY were carried on.* But no one knows what these attempts were, or what the *violence, or artifice* was, that they can complain of. Did any
of

of these they dislike, violently turn the Ministers of their side out of their pulpits? Did they oppress the people, and deprive them of their undoubted right of disposing of their place of worship? Did they betray any trust the people had lodg'd in them? or assume a prerogative they had no right to? Did they use any other *artifice* than argument? Did they put any upon reading one side of the controversy only? These things are notoriously known to have been the practices of some in *Exeter*. Is the world mistaken all this while on which side the controversy they are to be look'd for? I can't but here publish to the world, what I have great reason to believe; that there are very few of these Gentlemen, who have look'd into the controversy they have taken upon them to decide in such an extraordinary manner. This many of them have not stuck openly to declare. And let the world judge then, whether they have not taken things upon trust, and been guided by a blind zeal for a darling prejudice.

THEY add: That *the strange progress*

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gress it had of late made, especially among the youth here, necessitated them to proceed with that expedition, to prevent the many evil consequences they were in fear of. I am verily persuaded, that all the violence and artifice which the whole ejected party were capable of using, could not have done a tenth part so much to farther the progress they speak of, as what was done by the violence and artifice of the Assembly in September, of which the principal managers were warn'd beforehand in a friendly manner. And a very unaccountable cause the Gentlemen must be engaged in, if it will justify proceedings that are so grossly unjust as theirs have been.

NOR could we think it reasonable, say they, that such as declined to declare their own faith, could be supposed competent Advisers for us. And thus have they return'd the Ministers complement, by taking part with them against those who differ'd from them; just as the Ministers have thought fit to do with them against us. And hence 'tis plain, they desired not the advice of
in.

indifferent persons, but only of those who would in every punctilio comply with their prejudices. But the reflection is disingenuous, since there were none that declined declaring their faith; unless we lay it down for an undoubted truth, That 'tis impossible men should declare their faith without the first Article of the Church of *England*, and the fifth and sixth Answers of the Assembly's Catechism.

THEY say: They cannot in conscience joyn with those ministers, who decline to defend these truths (tho' requested to do so) when they are openly attack'd: The two several times they requested me, I stated and defended the truth according to the best of my skill; and so did my two brethren. And what would they have had us do more? *but rather countenance and encourage the advancers of those errors, by declaring for a SUBORDINATION, &c.* This &c. is a malicious one; for they have nothing else to tell the world I declared for. 'Tis a sign how they understand the matter, when this has been what almost all Divines ancient and mo-

dern have declar'd for, as I perhaps may
 elfewhere shew, if no body do's happily
 prevent me. I only take notice here at
 present, that Mr. *Moor* himself, one of
 the seven country Advisers, tells us, in his
Calm D fence, p.44. "That those who ad-
 " here to the common faith, do acknow-
 " ledge, that the Son of God, consider'd
 " relatively, is *inferior* and *subordinate* to
 " the *Father*." And why was it a crime
 in me to declare for a *Subordination*, which
 is agreeable to the common faith ?

THEY say: *Upon all occasions we are ready
 to demonstrate a christian temper to those
 who differ from us, and to maintain a bro-
 therly love towards them.* If their future
 demonstrations should prove no better
 than their past, they will never work
 much conviction. They have not treat-
 ed us with so much as common decency,
 nor is there the least instance they can
 allege of any thing they have done (I
 speak of them as a Committee) that has
 had the least shew of a *Christian temper*,
 or *brotherly love*. Let them, if they can,
 so much as name one,

As we are not for imposing our Sentiments on them, or persecuting them in any respect for what opinions they may hold; so we only insist on our own liberty of worshipping God agreeable to our consciences, and of hearing those ministers who will preach and defend the faith which we have received, and which we think most agreeable to the word of God. The whole of their proceedings have been utterly disagreeable to this profession. Was there any one thing in their power, which they did not do, to impose their sentiments upon us? Was it not to impose upon us, when they insisted, according to their own account, upon our agreeing to one of their four Tests? Were they not for imposing, when they would not let the people have the use of their own place of worship, unless they would hear Ministers of their sentiments? Was it not persecution, when they took away both Ministers and People's right? Has there been no persecution practis'd since by their party? I could mention one of the twelve subscribers, who is reported to have said, There might possi-

possibly be a way found out to prevent our having a separate meeting. And we could not afterwards but reflect upon his words, when we found a difficulty was made of licensing our place of worship. And so much have we known of their dislike to *persecution* and *imposition*, that we may, without much uncharitableness, lay the difficulties we have met with in procuring a convenient place to build on, at the door of some of the party. Nor do I expect that any methods of persecution, which are practicable, shall be unattempted. I have grounds for what I say, notwithstanding this declaration.

'Tis a shame to see how the very management of trade is directed by party views, and the men who glory in their orthodoxy, are not content themselves to forbear dealing with such as differ from them, but stir up others by the same arts to deter men from joining with us. Nor can any thing be more notorious in the party, than their freely censuring our state, notwithstanding the Advice given these Gentlemen, and the profession

fession they make of their christian tem-
 per. And I wish the industry they use to
 prejudice people against us, was but ac-
 companied with an equal fairness and ve-
 racity. I can truly say, the vilest falsehoods
 are spread abroad concerning me, as the
 most undoubted truths. And there is
 one instance of the most barbarous treat-
 ment, that I can't but resent; and that is,
 That by giving us the name of *Arians*
 they have set the mob upon us; and e-
 specially as they have furnish'd the Bal-
 lad-makers with matter for their scurri-
 lity, and so made us the song of the
 drunkard; in so much that we are in-
 sulted in the very streets, by those whose
 fathers we might have disdain'd to have
 set with the dogs of our flocks, and whose
 reproaches, for my own part, I much
 less regard than the barkings of those
 creatures.





A LETTER to Mr. EVELEIGH,
in Answer to his, printed at the
End of the Account.

S. I. R,
I Have seen the *Letter*, which
 you have done me the honour
 to write concerning me, and
 which is publish'd at the end of the *Lon-*
don edition of the *Account*. I could have
 wish'd you had address'd your *Letter* to
myself, and in a more private way, that the
 World might have known nothing of the
 satisfaction, which I am forced to give
 you in this publick manner.

THE great design of your *Letter* is to
 shew, how solemnly and repeatedly you
 sought to have some *Conferences* appoint-
 ed between Mr. *Hallet*, Mr. *Withers*, and
 myself on one hand, and yourself and some
 other Ministers on the other. The matter
 of

of fact I freely own : You *proposed* these *Conferences*, as you say, *solemnly* ; which I don't wonder at, because I believe you cannot propose any thing in another manner ; you *proposed* them likewise *frequently*, it seems, after many refusals, which would have appear'd very strange to me in any man, unless he were of the temper of Mr. *Eveleigh*, or the man described in *Horace's* Satyr, *Ibam forte via sacra*, &c. whom I could not forbear often remembering, while I was reading your *Letter*.

You expect, no doubt, I should give my reasons for refusing this *solemn* and *repeated* proposal ; and I shall give you them with that frankness, which I remember you have seem'd to approve of in me. I had then some reasons against conferring with you who made the proposal, and others against conferring with such as were likely to be join'd with you.

As to yourself ; I apprehended such *Conferences* might beget an uneasiness between us, who were neighbouring Ministers ; and therefore I thought it better to avoid them. You know I have been

concern'd with you, and had occasion to see your management ; and since you are not unacquainted with my opinion of it, you cannot be displeased with your friend, who was careful to avoid the temptation of shewing, as in all probability he must have shewn, a dislike of that which you seem'd so highly to approve of yourself. I had likewise observ'd another thing in you, which seem'd to render me very unfit to confer with you ; and that was, that you often appear'd fond of making long speeches, when I was too dull of understanding, to perceive what you intended ; so that I could not hope for the benefit, which you in your great kindness design'd me. Besides, your way of reasoning was so far different from mine, that let which will be the better, we were not much like to edify one another by a Conference. I could not expect my discourse could do much good upon you, unless I would fill it with allegories, quaint allusions, and such like pretty turns ; which, alas ! would have cost me so much hard study to invent, that I was

too *weak-bodied* to be able to indure it, unless I would have been content to be taken off from my *preaching*, &c. which I knew you were against. And as little could I expect to profit by you ; I don't say the Fault was not in in myself ; but this I found to be actually the case. I have not been able to remember the pretty things you have let fall in my company, (I attribute it to a want of a *genius* in myself) many times I could not understand them, and was loth to give you the needless trouble of repeating them ; and if I perceiv'd your meaning, I soon used to forget, what you took a great deal of pains (I thank you) to make me understand. There is one instance I can recollect, and will set before you ; and the rather, because by mentioning it I shall not discover any secret, you having frequently dropt it in other company. It was your proof of the unlawfulness of using organs in the worship of God, from those words of the Apostle, *Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess ; but be ye filled with the spirit*. And tho' you took much

pains to make me understand your way of reasoning, and I am fond enough of any argument in favour of a conclusion I like; yet I profess, if you would now give me the world, I am not able to give an account, how you put these things together. I hope you will not be displeased, that I give you an opportunity of communicating your noble thought to the world, which otherwise is like to be quite lost, especially if the rest of those you have imparted it to should happen to be as simple as myself.

BESIDES, I might perhaps think I had not *mathematics* enough to take in the demonstrations you might offer. I remember very well I tried once, but could make nothing of your faith *solemnly* put into the form of an *equilateral triangle*. And can you blame my prudence, that I cared not to expose myself in a *solemn conference*, by appearing confounded with such kind of demonstrations?

I am much obliged to you for furnishing me with a scrap of our conversation when together, which I hope, upon second

cond thoughts, will help you to perceive I was not the most unreasonable man in the world, in refusing *solemn conferences*. Thus you are pleased to relate it: *He then talk'd of impositions.* I said, *Our schemes were as much against impositions as his; but Christianity, said I, is no imposition.* Ay! but your Christianity ought to have common sense. *That was his reply.* No doubt you have satisfied your readers, that I declined conferring, from a fear of such a shrewd reasoner, who could tell his tale so well too after the conference was over. *Christianity* is indeed, as you say, no *imposition*, consider'd in itself; nor is the Book of *Common-prayer*, when consider'd in like manner; but if Christianity be imposed by men, does it not then become an imposition? My notion is, that the State should not impose *Christianity*, but leave every one free to chuse his own religion, provided it interferes not with the civil interest. But if you, Sir, are for *imposing Christianity*, as you are, if I don't mistake you; how can your scheme be as much against

against impositions, as mine? Nay, if you think you may impose Christianity, because you are persuaded of the truth of it, as doubtless that is your reason; why may you not impose any thing else, concerning which you have the like persuasion? If what you mention was my reply, tho' I remember it not, you will believe me, when I assure you, as I design'd no reflection upon Christianity itself, which is undoubtedly the most reasonable and sensible institution that can be; so nor did I mean that you had any particular spite against it. Both these must have been far from my thoughts, who could intend no more than pleasantly, and with the freedom of a friend, to rally your affecting a mysterious, intricate, and perplexed way of discoursing upon every thing, which used to set them above the reach of men of common sense, or at least above me; and if you could recollect the representation, which 'tis probable you made of *Christianity* in that conversation, I am apt to think you would do a friendly part toward the justifying

tifying my expression. But I must depend upon your memory and candor for this, because I have unhappily lost all remembrance of it, as I often used to do of what you say.

I hope I have given you, Sir, all the satisfaction you desire of the reasons of my refusing to confer with you. As to the other Brethren; they know I never shun'd them, 'till they had form'd a design and cabal against me, and had besides dealt perfidiously with me. This I shall lay open in another place.

I perceive you seem to resent it, that I should be as desirous of our *writing*, as you were of our *confering*. And I must own, had the Controversy only been between Ministers, I should have been very much of your mind, because that might have prevented noise and disturbance. But you know, and complain of the growth of the opinion among the people; and certainly writing was more adapted to help them than conference. Writing would not have more *filled the country with disputes*, than the proceedings of the Assembly

sembly did, which put all into confusion, tho' we were quiet enough just before. There seem'd to me as much need of *writing*, as *preaching* about these matters; and a little more study would have serv'd for both. And the Gentlemen of *Exeter* were sensible of the need of both; or they would never have urged Mr. *Withers* and me to write. Nay, you yourself are at length sensible of it, and are accordingly favouring the World with your labours. Your writing was most likely to do me good, because I could never remember your discourse. And farther, I propos'd one advantage to myself by this way, and that is, that it would retrench abundance of *impertinence*, because men would be asham'd to print any thing of that nature. And I do assure you, Sir, when I mention'd writing, it was not with a design to put you upon exposing yourself; but rather, that you might prevail upon the most able of your friends to try their skill. And, as a proof of this, I will acquaint you with what I believe is a secret. I am told, a motion was made
you,

you, to insist upon a *recommendatory Preface* to your Piece that is coming out, from your two leading men, Mr. *Bull* and Mr. *Walron*, which would much promote the spreading of it. This motion, I now let you know, came originally from me, who thought it would prevent your lessening your character by writing; and I was verily persuaded, those Gentlemen would never hazard their reputation by such a *recommendation*, however willing they might be, that you should hazard yours, by printing your performance. But I will not tell you all the reason I had for my persuasion concerning their prudence and policy. There is one thing you have not clear'd, with reference to your insisting upon a Conference; and that is, that pretending to be against impositions, you could have no more right to prescribe conferring to us, than we had to prescribe writing to you.

You will please to favour me, next time you write, with a list of the *Club of idle men* you say we have, *who have nothing else to do but to write*, or at least

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give me an account where they meet; because, as I profess, I know not whom you mean, the World will be apt to suspect you of being an incautious writer, if you can allege no evidence of the truth of what you advance. If you *think it hard* that you must *write against you know not whom*, you may be even with them, not letting them know against whom they write; as you know some of your friends have done, particularly the authors of *Arius detected*, *The Account* to which your *Letter* is subjoin'd, and *The Postscript to Mr. Trosse's Catechism*.

You will take a friendly caution well; and therefore, be not censorious of you know not whom; as you are, when you say *the Answerer to Mr. Trosse appeared to have no reverence for truth*; and 'twill be time enough for you to suppose he *had no reputation to lose*, when any of your own Works shall have proved you capable of writing as good sense, as that Answer contains.

If I said, as you report, that the *common opinion about the Trinity was an error*; where

where was the crime? Did not the great Mr. *Howe* agree with me therein? Nay, I can allege two Witnesses who were present, when one of the seven Ministers, speaking of the *Trinity*, said, that three persons were a contradiction. You see I am as good as my word, when I said, *If I was turn'd out I would write*; tho' the truth is, I offer'd to write, whether I was turn'd out, or not.

I cannot but observe to you, how solicitous you appear to be to find somewhat against me, to make me seem culpable, that so a little colour may be put upon the proceedings against me; and as I accept of your good will, so I think you have done considerable service to my reputation; since not one thing is yet charged upon me, that looks like a crime. Thanks be to my good God, who has directed my way hitherto in the midst of so many, who have waited for my halting. Oh, Sir, had I trusted to your *tears* in the *Coffee-house*, or your promise of *keeping our Conferences secret for a time*, had I given you the least advantage against me;

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what a noise would you then have made, who can make one now about nothing? Was it not prudent in me to refuse to have any more to do with men, who were resolved upon violence and fury, who had wilfully kindled a flame, tho' Mr. *Watberg* and I warn'd them of the consequences, and who appear'd determin'd against any measures of quenching it? Is there no hand of God to be seen in the imprudence of every step that has been taken against us? Were you only concern'd for his cause, how could so many wise men act under such a continued infatuation?

You may please to give my service to Mr. *Reynolds*, and acquaint him with the sense I have of his brotherly kindness, in desiring, as appears by the begining of your *Letter*, that what he apprehended made against me, *might be made more clear*. And truly I think he had need get things much better clear'd, or else he is never like to obtain that *rejoicing*, which he seems to wait for, and which no *charitable* Christian would ever envy him. I wonder what prudence directed you to write,

or
or

him to print, that first sentence of your Letter.

NOR is the prudence of the last paragraph less admirable ; for by that it appears, both that our Brother is convinc'd, there was reason for my charging the Gentlemen as I had done, unless somewhat more could be said in their defence, than was to be met with in the *Account* ; and that the Gentlemen have nothing more to say, and so they are forced to acknowledge the truth of the charge I brought against them.

YOU are pleased to call what I say in my *Case* about that unjust way they took to eject us, *my clamour*. But have I said one word of it more than is true ? Dare you contradict it ? And if you dare not, what must the World think of you, that you can speak in such a manner, and endeavour by a hard word given me, to palliate as gross a piece of injustice and oppression as was ever known ? What must they think of you, but that as you have had a hand in *killing* ; so now you are flattering with the Gentlemen, in order
to

to your *taking possession* : I must tell you, the coming into our Pulpit is a taking part with the oppressors ; and I expect and demand it, as a piece of justice from yourself, and your six Brethren, who advised the Gentlemen, and then decently and orderly took your turns to supply our places, that you vindicate what has been done, or else own yourselves to be inexcusable, in invading what belongs to us. You ought to have made some reply to what I said in the last page of the *Case* to this purpose. And whoever will come in our stead, must expect to be look'd upon, and represented too, as one that takes part in the *gain of oppression and injustice*, unless he shall be able publickly to defend the proceedings against us. And, whatever you may think of it, and call it, our Complaint is *clamor oppressorum*, the cry of the oppressed, which neither your daubing, nor your tears, shall ever be able to keep from ascending up to Heaven. If the Gentlemen can procure no better pleader of their Cause, it will be honest in you to let them

them know, they had better employ none at all. I have spared you, by not taking notice of many pitiful, mean things in your *Letter*, because I would shew you how truly I still am,

SIR,

Your sincere Friend

Exon, April

30, 1719.

and Servant,

JAMES PEIRCE.

SINCE my finishing this *Letter*, Mr. *Hallet* look'd out the copy of the *Letter* he sent you, and which you mention. 'Tis too long to be here inserted, but my thoughts of it are, that 'tis well writ, and might have satisfied any man but yourself who was the proposer of the *Conferences*, that no good was to be expected from them. 'Tis pity you were not wise enough to

to perceive when you had good advice given you, and that, when given with a truly christian spirit, and back'd by solid reasoning. I am very glad Mr. Hallet kept a copy of his Letter, which may make you blush, when you reflect upon what you have said of it. I would advise you to print it (as it will well bear printing) if you have any farther design of exposing yourself. But I suppose you may scorn to be beholden to any man for his assistance that way, and may chuse, as the more effectual method, to publish another Letter of your own.



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